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Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Fred Horvat

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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Like most years, the summer months usually means that the news start to decline, as things tend to quiet down over the summer months. As such, this week's issue has fallen the trend. Hopefully, things will pick up a little bit in order to have a more full issue week after week. We'll see what happens!

Until next time...

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - What Can Save Atari?
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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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What Can Save Atari?

Remember such old-school games as Pong and Asteroids? They're among the most important games of all time having basically kicked off the gaming industry.

Atari made those - along with some of the first commercially successful home consoles. Atari had been a mainstay in the gaming industry since its beginning and a major player for a number years - but the company buckled under hard times in 2013, stopped being profitable, and became a sinking ship. Now, the formerly bankrupt publisher/developer has a plan to get right back out of the red. That plan has basically nothing to do with games. Oh, and it makes little to no sense whatsoever.

In May of this year, Atari CEO Frederic Chesnais claimed that Atari is "more than a software brand, it's a hardware brand." But don't get your hopes(?) up that Atari will be getting back into the console business. Nope, the company will be looking into "gamified hardware and wearable devices." What kind of hardware would that entail, exactly? Chesnais explained "...like, a watch, a gamified watch." Ah, OK - so like, the echnology we had in 1989. He continued, "It's not what we are going to do, but think about [something like] that. Like a new type of watch is something we 'could do.' A watch, branded, where you don't have an 'ordinary' watch."...Right. The exec continued with an idea that incorporates solar chips and jackets to create clothing that is capable of charging cell phones. Alright, I won't lie: I'd probably buy one of those.

With that..unique direction in mind, Atari now has just under 3 years to pull itself out of the bankruptcy hole and pay back over $5.5 million in debt. So, what's this big plan that's going to save Atari from sinking into the abyss, turn everything around, and get back to being profitable? Well, the latest official statement from the publisher offers a few avenues for executing the strategy, and the target markets are all over the place. First, those classic games I mentioned earlier will be relaunched on platforms such as iOS, Android, and "online" (whatever "online" means). Which doesn't sound so bad. I mean, I wouldn't mind shooting Asteroids on my phone while I wait for the bus (while charging my phone in my spiffy, Atari-brand solar jacket). But then the strategy takes a hard left...into a brick wall.

The company then says it's planning to capitalize on "other rapidly growing markets - including LGBT, social casinos, real-money gambling, and YouTube with exclusive video content." Sort of a bizarre statement there, if you ask me - especially if the company is talking about going after those markets all at the same time (but probably not). Sure, casino games might be an option that a desperate and failing gaming company might try to take, but what's odd are the other parts of that statement. Why would Atari single out the LGBT demographic? Is the LGBT market gambling much more than anyone else? Will the solar-panel clothing only appeal to that target group? It seems like the term is just being used as a buzzword because "that's what people are talking about these days," and also, oh yeah, YouTube.

At this point, it doesn't seem like Atari really does have a plan to save itself from going under. Actually, the statement released by the company essentially confirms that it has no idea what Atari is anymore. Given Atari's storied history, it would've been exciting to see the company buckle down and devise a new strategy to rise like a phoenix from the ashes and make some awesome games. But judging by the company's latest statement, that sure as hell isn't happening anytime soon.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

U.S. Ambassador Baucus Says China Hacking Threatens National Security

Cyber theft of trade secrets by China is a threat to U.S. national security, U.S. Ambassador to China Max Baucus said on Wednesday in the first major public address of his tenure, warning that Washington would continue to pressure Beijing.

Baucus' remarks come as commercial ties between the world's two largest economies have been strained over cyber espionage charges and revelations by former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden of U.S. spying.

In May, Washington indicted five Chinese military officers for hacking U.S. companies, prompting Beijing to suspend a Sino-U.S. working group on cyber issues. It adamantly denies the charges.

Such behavior is criminal and runs counter to China's World Trade Organization commitments, Baucus told business leaders at an American Chamber of Commerce in China luncheon two weeks ahead of annual high-level bilateral talks in Beijing.

"Cyber-enabled theft of trade secrets by state actors in China has emerged as a major threat to our economic, and thus, national security," Baucus said.

"We won't sit idly by when a crime is committed in the real world. So why should we when it happens in cyber space?" he said. "We will continue to use diplomatic and legal means to make clear that this type of behavior must stop."

Tensions over cyber security rose in late 2012 after Washington banned Chinese communications equipment makers Huawei Technologies Co Ltd and ZTE Corp from building U.S. telecoms infrastructure.

Beijing responded by pressuring big state-owned firms to stop buying U.S.-made hardware, emphasizing security risks following Snowden's revelations, people in the industry said.

U.S. equipment and software providers such as IBM Corp and Cisco Systems Inc. have already seen their China sales drop after the Snowden leaks.

Like a string of ambassadors before him, Baucus, a former Montana senator who arrived in Beijing in March, has made it his immediate priority to boost the two countries' commercial and economic links. He has stressed that stronger economic ties will help resolve a host of thorny political and security challenges.

Baucus said a bilateral investment treaty would help China rebalance its economy by opening up its service industries to more foreign investment and that moving forward negotiations would be among his top priorities as ambassador.

"I believe that the U.S.-China bilateral investment treaty ... today could do for China's investment regime what the WTO accession did 15 years ago," Baucus said.

The investment treaty talks, which were launched in 2008, will likely be at the center of the Strategic & Economic Dialogue that will bring U.S.

Secretary of State John Kerry and Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew to Beijing in July.

Disputes over cyber security topped the agenda at last year's meeting, initiated in 2008 to help manage a relationship that is growing more complex with China's emergence as major economic and military power. However, the annual talks have yielded few substantive agreements.

Lew has said he will push China to speed up economic reforms and do more to allow markets to determine the value of its yuan currency.

Washington's aim for the investment treaty is to loosen Beijing's restrictions in key sectors from service industries to agriculture, and ensure that foreign companies receive treatment equal to Chinese private and state-owned enterprises.

China heavily restricts dozens of industries and U.S. firms have long complained they are forced to meet unfair burdens such as ownership caps and are pressured to transfer technology in exchange for market access.

Net Neutrality Advocates Arrested at Google HQ

Tuesday night, a small group of protesters fighting for free speech on the Internet were arrested at Google's Mountain View campus. The group is calling for a nation Internet blackout campaign on July 15 to demand the Federal Communications Commission solidify net neutrality.

Sgt. Kurtis Stenderup of the Santa Clara County Jail confirmed 10 protesters were arrested last night, and he indicated some may still be detained. "Most of the arrests were cited out for the trespassing charge," he told us. "However, some arrests had outstanding warrants so I will have to look into their status."

For the uninitated, the FCC recently proposed "fast lanes" for the Internet, which many allege would create a two-tiered access to Internet Service Providers' pipelines. Having distributors of content (like Netflix, news websites, or individuals) pay for more bandwidth to distribute over broadband would stifle free speech, many allege, instead advocating a concept known as net neutrality. Basically, free speech is guaranteed by equal access, but those who control that access want to slap a price tag on distribution on the internet.

Though Google's mantra, "don't be evil" seems like a no-brainer, the protesters allege Google has only taken token gestures to address net neutrality. A damning report by the San Francisco Chronicle showed Google only spent about $280,000 in political contributions to sway regulators to maintain net neutrality (with their other net neutrality advocates' money adding up to $600,000 spent). Conversely, the telecom industry (AT&T, Comcast and others) spent over $2 million to sway lawmakers to favor giving them more control over who pays for access to Internet usage.

They protesters believe Google should take the lead in the fight for net neutrality. From the group's website:

"In 2012, Google created a petition as part of a campaign against the Stop Online Piracy Act and the Protect Intellectual Property Act that

collected over 7 million signatures. The massive online resistance in opposition to these two monstrous bills stopped them from becoming a reality.

Today, the Internet is once again under attack, this time by ISP s who wish to capitalize on content providers and eliminate net neutrality. Though Google and other major companies such as Netflix, Amazon and Microsoft have come out in support of preserving a free and open web, we believe much more can be done.

Though many of us have concerns about the larger implications of Google's effect on the world, as far as surveillance and ties to military technology, we are not here to protest Google.

Google, with its immense power, has a social responsibility to uphold the values of the Internet. We encourage Google to engage in a serious, honest dialogue on the issue of net neutrality and to stand with us in support of an internet that is free from censorship, discrimination, and access fees."

At yesterday's protest, 20 or so occupiers set up camp at Google HQ to convince the Googlers to take the lead on net neutrality. But as night fell, the Mountain View Police Department informed them it was time to leave.

A live video stream aired by Twitter user and Occupier @punkboyinsf revealed the conversation between police and protesters, which was mostly orderly, but the cops couldn't see the protesters' perspective. "We're supporting them, we want them to support us," one protester told police. One officer answered, "If you want to partner with them, just leave. Try to contact them tomorrow." Peacefullly, almost pleadingly, one protester said "we just want to rap with them."

At about 11pm, officers announced they'd make arrests. As @punkboyinsf caught the action on camera from a distance, an officer nabbed him as well, wrestling him to the ground. The occupier asked if he could at least put his camera in his bag, to which the officer replied "sir, it's too late. Just relax, just relax," and arrested him. @PunkboyinSF was one of the protesters released earlier this morning, he tweeted, and now the story has spread worldwide.

Seperate and loosely related protests outside Google's I/O conference in San Francisco today are ongoing as of this writing. When we asked Mountain View Police Department spokesperson Saul Jaeger if the arrests were motivated by the MVPD, or because of a request from Google, Jaeger replied, "it was Google's call."

The protesters are calling for a national day of action on July 15, the end of the FCC's public comment period on net neutrality. An Internet blackout campaign modeled after the anti-SOPA/PIPA online protests that managed to preserve Internet freedom in the past. Specifically, they wrote, they urge websites to do the following:

"Blackout their entire website for a day, replacing it with an info link to petitions and the FCC comment page.

Add a button to their website connecting users to information and petitions online.

Create their own creative way to connect their users to this issue and

how to fight back.

We are committed to occupying the Google Headquarters until the company gets involved in honest dialogue on net neutrality, and until real action is taken to maintain a free and open internet."

To his credit, Mayor Ed Lee recently championed net neutrality at the recent Conference of Mayors, this Monday. His resolution to urge the FCC to enshrine net neutrality as a right was signed by New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio and other mayors across the country.

Net neutrality is critical for an innovation economy to thrive, because if the broadband companies could choose what web pages you can access, the Internet would lose its power as the most powerful communication tool we ve ever known, said Mayor Lee, in a press statement. I am grateful to my cosponsors and the U.S. Conference of Mayors for adopting principles of a Free & Open Internet as the official policy of America s Mayors. We believe in transparency and comprehensive non-discrimination, and we will fight for these values as the FCC writes regulations in the coming months. There are serious implications for commerce and democracy, and we re making sure U.S. cities have a voice in this fight.

It looks like Lee has a lot in common with the Occupy Google protesters.

NSA Releases First Statistics on Surveillance Sweep

The US National Security Agency released its first "transparency report" Friday, as part of an effort to quell the firestorm over reports of its massive data collection efforts.

The NSA report said that in 2013, it obtained fewer than 2,000 orders from the secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court.

That included 1,767 orders based on "probable cause" for an investigation, and 131 orders allowing the agency to collect incoming and outgoing phone numbers using a so-called "pen register" or "trap and trace."

The agency said it obtained just one order using Section 702 of the FISA intelligence law, which facilitates gathering foreign intelligence data on non-American people, groups or organizations outside the United States.

But the number of "targets," which could be persons or organizations, was 89,138 last year.

The NSA said it made 178 applications under the law’s bulk collection or "business records" provision - which allows the agency to sweep up vast amounts of telephone metadata.

That enabled the NSA to make a total of 423 specific queries last year to gather more data, along with queries on 248 "known or presumed US persons" and 172 other "individuals, entities or foreign powers."

The report said 19,212 "national security letters" - administrative subpoenas that allow the FBI to collect information without a warrant - were issued last year, containing 38,832 requests for information.

The intelligence agency, which has come under fire following news of massive data collection capabilities, said it released the report under a June 2013 directive from President Barrack Obama.

The directive ordered the agency to "declassify and make public as much information as possible about certain sensitive US government surveillance programs while protecting sensitive classified intelligence and national security information."

The agency said it would continue to do so on an annual basis.

The release came after the US House of Representatives passed a bill to curb the NSA’s intelligence-gathering, although the measure remains in doubt, with some critics saying it was watered down.

Responding to the NSA release, Google law enforcement director Richard Salgado welcomed "a step in the right direction of increasing trust in both government and Internet services," but said further steps are needed.

Salgado said the government reports "in a manner that makes it impossible to compare its report with the report of companies" like Google, which can only provide a range of numbers about requests for data.

"We would like to see the federal government report on its national security demands with more information about the targets than it does today," he said in a blog post.

"Companies like Google can only provide a limited snapshot of how national security authorities are used. The Department of Justice, however, can provide a complete picture."

The lack of information remains a sore point for civil rights and other activists.

Earlier on Friday, Greenpeace and the Electronic Frontier Foundation flew an airship over the NSA’s data center in Utah to protest mass surveillance programs.

The airship carried the message: "NSA Illegal Spying Below" along with a link steering people to a new web site, StandAgainstSpying.org.

Verizon Outage Causing Customer Outrage

Verizon Wireless is having severe network problems that are affecting a majority of their customers in the Northeast, Midwest, and Southern part of the United States. Many customers have taken to social media sites (both Twitter and Facebook) to attack Verizon s customer service looking for answers and solutions.

Naturally, Verizon has offered no solution, simply telling customers we are expecting it to be up in an hour they ve been saying this for the past two days.

Verizon has yet to release an official statement on the matter, leaving customers to draw their own conclusions on the matter. According to

Verizon s social media teams, the update is a scheduled update. This scheduled update is leaving customers unable to pay their bill or login to their account, with many users reporting that they have no cell service at all.

If you visit Verizon s official Facebook page, you ll notice user complaining about being ignored by the company s customer service. Verizon will acknowledge complaints, saying private message us and the like, but will not respond to the private messages. Now, it s clear that Verizon s brand management is spiraling out of control. In fact, users have begun using the hashtag #VerizonOutage to express their outrage over how Verizon is handling the situation not the type of PR that you want if you re a major cell phone company that thrives or dives with your brand image.

People are now suggesting that the breach of contract may be grounds for termination without an early termination fee which is otherwise impossible if you re a Verizon customer. Since we re all left to draw our own conclusions on exactly what is going on with Verizon s service right now, I, personally, believe that Verizon may have become victim to a hacker. Now, customers are only left to do nothing but wonder if the company will somehow impose one of their infamous fees on themselves for the Verizon outage.

Facebook Not So Diverse

Facebook, the world’s most popular social network, for the first time released statistics on the makeup of its workforce that do not reflect the demographics of its users around the globe.

The lopsided numbers are just the latest from a major Silicon Valley company to paint a stark picture of an industry sector dominated by white men and are sure to escalate an already heated debate over the lack of diversity in the tech industry.

Nearly 70% of Facebook employees are men and 57% are white. Asians make up 34% of employees.

But Hispanics represent just 4% and African Americans are just 2% of Facebook’s workforce.

When it comes to technical employees, the numbers are even more grim. Eighty-five percent are male, 53% white and 41% Asian. Hispanics make up just 3% and African Americans just 1% of the workforce.

At the top of the company, the statistics are no better. Seventy-seven percent of senior level employees are men, 74% are white and 19% are Asian. Hispanics account for 4% and African Americans for 2% of employees in high level positions.

"We build products to connect the world, and this means we need a team that understands and reflects many different communities, backgrounds and cultures," Maxine Williams, Facebook’s global head of diversity, said in a blog post.

Technology is a key driver of the U.S. economy. It makes the products from iPhones to Google search that Americans use every day. Yet the

companies that make these products do not mirror the demographics of the United States in race, gender or age.

The pressure is especially high for Facebook. Its users span races and cultures around the globe, and the majority of Facebook users are women, making it crucial for Facebook to have a diverse workforce, said Stanford fellow Vivek Wadhwa, author of the upcoming book Innovating Women.

Facebook finds itself in a bigger and brighter spotlight because its No. 2 executive is Sheryl Sandberg, one of Silicon Valley's most prominent female leaders and the author of the best seller Lean In.

She told USA TODAY earlier this month that the lack of diversity in male-dominated corporate America is "pretty depressing."

"Clearly Facebook has to step up now and do something about these numbers. They have to lead, not follow," Wadhwa said. "And not because it doesn't look good or that Sheryl Sandberg has been so vocal on this issue. Facebook has to do this for its own good and for its long-term growth."

For years Silicon Valley companies have resisted sharing diversity statistics with the public. But in recent weeks several companies led by Google released numbers under pressure from civil rights activist Jesse Jackson. He appeared at the shareholder meetings of Google and Facebook to demand the companies release the information.

"They must set specific, measurable goals, targets and timetables," Jackson said in a statement. "We will measure their results and hold companies publicly accountable."

Silicon Valley likes to think of itself as a meritocracy, a place where anyone with smarts, initiative and a great idea can make it, regardless of race, nation of origin, religion, politics, socioeconomic background or sexual orientation.

But statistics released by Facebook, Google and LinkedIn have exposed a stark reality: Hispanics and African Americans are still not taking part in this digital revolution.

Wadhwa says he gives credit to these companies for "coming clean" and taking steps to diversify their work forces.

Facebook says last year it launched a diversity team which has led to more hires and lower attrition for underrepresented groups. It has also formed partnerships with key groups to find more women and people of color. It's also offering training to employees in unconscious bias.

"We have a long way to go, but we're absolutely committed to achieving greater diversity at Facebook and across the industry," Williams said.

Google Removes First Search Results After EU Ruling

Google has begun removing some search results to comply with a European Union ruling upholding citizens' right to have objectionable personal information about them hidden in search engines.

The so-called "right to be forgotten" was upheld by Europe's top court on May 13 when it ordered Google to remove a link to a 15-year-old newspaper article about a Spanish man's bankruptcy.

"This week we're starting to take action on removals requests that we've received," a Google spokesman said on Thursday. "This is a new process for us. Each request has to be assessed individually and we're working as quickly as possible to get through the queue."

Google received over 41,000 requests over four days after it put up an online form allowing Europeans to request that search results be removed.

Internet privacy concerns shot up the agenda last year when former U.S. National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden revealed details of mass U.S. surveillance program involving European citizens and some heads of state.

The EU executive has been critical of several major U.S. web companies, such as Facebook and Google, over their handling of swathes of personal data. National governments recently moved towards extending Europe's strict data protection rules to all companies, not just European ones.

We Have A Duty To Remember, Not A Right To Be Forgotten

In a week-long series, National Post contributors reflect on a recent European Court of Justice judgment requiring Internet search providers to remove links to embarrassing information. Should Canadian citizens have a right to be forgotten ?

A right inevitably requires a corresponding duty, and the newfangled right to be forgotten is no exception. Your right to speak freely, to assemble or to vote is made real by everyone else s duty not to prevent you from doing so. How about the right to be forgotten? What is the duty that corresponds to this right ?

The right to be forgotten came about as a result of a recent decision of the European Court of Justice (ECJ). A Spanish man had complained to the court that events from his past involving long-ago debt problems still turned up in Google searches of his name. He had cleaned up his act, so to speak, and he was embarrassed by the constant revelation of his feckless past. He asked the ECJ to vindicate his right to be forgotten by ordering Google to prevent its search engine from turning up the offending links to press reports and legal notices about his past.

It is very important to underline that no real harm, other than some slight embarrassment, had been established. No one is alleging that the information in question is malicious, libellous or wrong. On the ontrary: The links that Google kicked up in its search for the Spanish gentleman s name are a factual record of past events.

To everyone s astonishment, the court ruled in the complainant s favour. People have the right to be forgotten, at least as far as Google s search engine is concerned, for it is Google that is placed in the unfair position of being judge and jury in what information is sufficiently old, outdated or embarrassing enough to warrant suppression.

This has had two predictable consequences. According to Britain s Daily Telegraph, Google Europe is now getting a link suppression request every seven seconds under this newfound right. Disgraced politicians and convicted paedophiles are just some of the unsavoury characters who are seizing the change to reinvent themselves by demanding to have links revealing their misdeeds forgotten.

And Google, which has no capacity to adjudicate claims, will likely be obliged to acquiesce in virtually all demands to have links deleted. For if the company doesn t delete such links and a government privacy czar in any European country finds that it was wrong not to, Google expose itself to serious fines.

This ruling threatens to change the Internet from a neutral platform, on which all the knowledge of humanity might eventually be made available, to a highly censored network, in which, every seven seconds, another person may unilaterally decide that they have a right to be forgotten and to have the record of their past suppressed.

That brings me back to the idea of the duty, which corresponds to the right to be forgotten. If people have such a right, logically, it must mean that the rest of us have a duty to forget. That is absurd. We have a duty to remember, not to forget; a duty not to let the past go, simply because it is inconvenient or embarrassing.

It is those who have lived in societies where the state arrogated to itself the power to remake the historical record who understand this best of all. In the appropriately named Book of Laughter and Forgetting, one of Czech writer Milan Kundera s characters who s caught up in the struggle against totalitarianism cries out that, the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against oblivions.

Kundera writes movingly of his own guilt for the mistakes of the past, for he was one of the young, passionate Czechoslovakians who welcomed the communists rise to power in 1948. Then came the disillusionment, including the periodic purges and removal of the disgraced and discredited from the historical record.

Suddenly, according to Kundera, young radicals such as himself, had the strange feeling of having sent something into the world, a deed of their own making, which had taken on a life of its own, lost all resemblance to the original idea and totally ignored the originators of the idea. So those young, intelligent radicals started shouting to their deed, calling it back, scolding it, chasing it, hunting it down.

But their duty was not to erase the record of their guilt, to pretend they had not been mistaken or to expiate their sins by forgetting. On the contrary, it was their duty to remember, to confront the past, to be the guardians of what would otherwise have been lost, so that it could, in due course, be recovered.

Our duty in the wake of the ECJ decision is to resist the cleansing of the historical record, whatever the alleged justification. History does not belong only to those who participated in its making. It belongs to all of us, who are its inheritors. The court s decision will, in time, prove itself impractical.

Much more importantly, people will come to realize that it was deeply mistaken in principle. Provided, of course, we don t forget why memory matters.

Google’s Plan To Fix Email

We hold the truth that email sucks to be self-evident, but there’s no agreement on how to fix it.

But at this week’s Google I/O conference in San Francisco, Google announced that it’s taking a novel approach to improving email: Opening its immensely popular Gmail up to developers by way of a new, proprietary API in beta. It seems to hope this API will eventually replace the current IMAP e-mail standard and turn the email service into a platform.

IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol), invented in 1986, has become far more popular in recent years as an alternative to POP - the POP standard doesn’t support flagging emails as read or unread across devices, which is pretty important now that you can check your email from your refrigerator just as easily as you can from your computer.

Email sucks! Here’s how five startups are trying to make it better.

Just about every mail client ever invented, including Microsoft Outlook and Mozilla Thunderbird, supports IMAP as the accepted standard for reading and receiving emails. Gmail has supported IMAP basically for the duration of its existence, meaning that any of those mail clients could act as an interface for Gmail.

Now, Google has basically created its own protocol for email. If developers flock to this Gmail API - by no means assured - Google could decide to deprecate support for IMAP, which would limit the number of mail clients and inevitably devices that will be compatible with Gmail.

Even so, that wouldn’t necessarily be all bad. Google is touting this step as a way to make Gmail a new platform for developers, opening the door to all kinds of handy-dandy new tools that take advantage of the ability to access email from within other, more specailized apps.

"While IMAP is great at what it was designed for (connecting email clients to email servers in a standard way), it wasn t really designed to do all of the cool things that you have been working on," writes Google’s Eric DeFriez in a blog entry.

DeFriez goes on to write that Google’s developers get Android-esque app-level permissions when accessing Gmail through the new API: If you only need your app to send e-mail and not read it, you can limit permission requests. He also says that it’s much faster than current mail access protocols.

So yes, email has problems, and fixing them with current mail access protocols that date back to the eighties often seems like trying to ice-skate uphill. And Gmail is a robust, incredibly popular platform that offers a lot of leverage for trying to fix things. But giving Google even more control over tools and technologies that we use every day seems like it may be a hard sell.

It’s been pointed out that despite the language of the blog post, the official documentation for this Google API indicates that "the Gmail API

should not be used to replace IMAP for full-fledged email client access." A Google spokesperson confirms that the company has no plans to discontinue IMAP support for Gmail.

That said, the API represents a better way of accessing email for developers than IMAP, so most apps built on top of Gmail will almost certainly end up going that route sooner rather than later - but Google is pitching it more as an "alternative" than a "replacement."

Dumbest Burglar Ever Logs In to Facebook on Victim s Home Computer, Forgets to Log Out

The world is full of truly stupid would-be criminals, but one Minnesota man might have just taken the crown for the title of World s Stupidest Thief. CBS Minnesota reports that police arrested 26-year-old Nicholas Wig for allegedly burglarizing a home in South St. Paul on June 19, after his victim discovered that Wig had used his computer to log in to his Facebook page and never logged out before leaving. When police arrived to arrest Wig, they also found that he was wearing his victim s watch, which obviously won t help with any potential defense.

Homeowner James Wood was needless to say surprised to see that Wig had taken the time to log in to Facebook while allegedly burglarizing his house, let alone that he had forgotten to log out of it before leaving.

World s dumbest criminal, Wood told CBS Minnesota. I started to panic but then I noticed he had pulled up his Facebook profile.

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom concurred with Wood s assessment that Wig might be the stupidest alleged thief he s ever seen.

I ve never seen this before, he said. It s a pretty unusual case, might even make the late-night television shows in terms of not being too bright.

Why You’re Never Too Old To Become a Social Media Maven

You hear it so often that you assume it must be true: Young "digital natives" are far better than their older counterparts at using social media, both personally and as a job skill.

But in the real world of social media, people old enough to be grandparents are finding that the skills they have developed throughout their careers make them equally adept, and sometimes even savvier, than young people.

"I love social media," says Patti Shock, 72, who teaches online courses in hospitality management for Florida International University in Miami from her home in Las Vegas. "It helps me to keep in touch with people I lost touch with for decades. I meet new people. ... I learn from it every day."

Shock, who also teaches online courses for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, uses YouTube and Pinterest to put together webinars, online course

material and other resources for her classes. Twitter helps her communicate with students and Facebook allows her to keep up with professional colleagues. "The resources for teaching are incredible," she says.

People who didn't grow up using social media sometimes overestimate its difficulty, says Amy Vernon, a New York-based consultant who is a frequent speaker on social media. A former newspaper reporter and editor, she is on both Mashable's and The Huffington Post's list of social media mavens.

"The amount of technology you need to use them is very minimal and very simple," Vernon, 45, says. "If you can send email, if you can use Google, you can be on social media ... If you can turn (your computer) on and type, you can use social media."

A 2013 Pew Research study found that 73 percent of Americans are online use social networking sites, up from 8 percent in 2005. Among older people, 65 percent of those 50 to 64 use social media, as do 46 percent of those over 65.

Younger, more educated and more affluent seniors report higher social media use.

"There certainly is a degree of comfort that younger people have because they've grown up with these sites," Vernon says. "I think a lot of it is the comfort with how much of yourself that you're putting out there."

Many people start using Facebook to keep up with friends and family, but then they realize it can also be a powerful tool for business.

Linda Bernstein, 61, teaches workshops in strategic social media for Columbia Journalism School's continuing education program and also does private consulting. When the course was started four years ago, it focused on why professionals should use social media. Today, it focuses on how.

"We're no longer convincing people you need to be on social media," she says. "We're way beyond that."

Bernstein works with midcareer journalists, authors and CEOs, among others, who realize they need to at least understand social media, if not use it well, for their careers. "There is resistance, though it's fading a lot," she says. "Older people don't always see networking possibilities."

Once they get over their initial resistance, older people often discover their previous career and life experience are assets in using social media effectively.

While the 22-year-old intern may be a technology whiz, the older manager has more knowledge of the industry, more experience dealing with people and a stronger sense of content and connections, all key social networking skills.

"Life experience can make it a little easier to deal with all these different sorts of people you deal with online," Vernon says, including knowing when not to respond to a provocative tweet or Facebook posting. "Understanding how the business works, you can respond to people better."

While it’s not necessary to be a master of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Tumblr, Instagram, Google+, Flipboard and whatever other medium came to market since you started reading this story, it is important to be knowledgeable about the various platforms to figure out which ones will work best for your needs.

"For a small business, you don’t need to be on everything," Vernon says. "You need to find out where your customers and your audience are and go there. Be the place where it makes sense for you to be."

Before you start using social media, you need to figure out what you are trying to accomplish because that will help determine your strategy and your platforms. Are you looking for customers? Are you seeking a new job? Do you want to interact with leaders and others in your field? Do you want to recruit employees? Do you want to sell products or position yourself as an expert?

Shock says she finds that the ease with which both students and contemporaries use social media varies considerably. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are sometimes less adept online because they have used computers less. Older adults who have been using computers since the 1970s or 1980s find it easy to transfer skills learned on CompuServe, DOS and alt-listservs to Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Learning to use social media well is particularly important for people who plan to keep working beyond retirement age, start second careers in midlife or do volunteer work in retirement, Bernstein says.

"I wish that there was more access for people who are active in the workplace to learn this without sticking out like a sore thumb," she says. She works a lot with authors who need social media to promote their books. "For some people, it’s natural," she said. "Others really struggle."

Here are five tips for getting started or moving ahead in social media:

Take a targeted approach. Know that you don’t have to master all platforms. Instead, focus on one or two that you can do well and that will serve your needs.

Maintain a two-way conversation. Remember that social media is, above all, professional networking. Make it a point to be helpful and engaging rather than focusing solely on self-promotion. Listening is often more important than talking.

Know what your goals are. Your strategy will be very different if you are promoting a book than it will be if you are looking for a job. Identify your goals and the social media platforms that will best position you to achieve them.

Prepare for an evolving social landscape. Expect that the rules and best practices will change frequently, and be ready to change with them.

Learn from the best. Seek out the top social media mavens in your career fields and see what they do on social media.

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